

nation of the facts. National health insurance was a part of the platform of the Commonwealth (nonlabor) Government led by the late Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons. A bill was brought down, debated, and all the necessary organization planned. Then came grave threats of war, and the necessity arose of spending up to the limit of Australia's resources on war preparedness. Under the circumstances, the Government decided that national insurance must be delayed, but certainly not abandoned.

Because of his opposition to delay in establishing national insurance, the Hon. R. G. Menzies, Attorney-General, resigned from the Lyons Government. On the death of Mr. Lyons, Mr. Menzies was elected leader of his party and became Prime Minister.

As the new Prime Minister has staked his political future on establishing national health insurance, it is safe to predict that if he retains his office he will lose little time in bringing the system into operation.

Herewith I am sending you copy of a speech in the Federal Senate by the leader of the Lyons Government in that Chamber (Senator McLachlan), and a résumé of a speech by the Commonwealth Treasurer in the House of Representatives.

Should you need further material, I suggest you write to the Hon. R. G. Menzies, Prime Minister, Canberra, Australia.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed): A. H. O'CONNOR,  
Manager.

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#### COMMENT

(Note: Doctor Brown's letter and enclosure were sent to Dr. Morris Fishbein, Editor of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. Doctor Fishbein's reply follows.)

(COPY)

THE JOURNAL OF THE  
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Chicago, August 29, 1939.

Dr. George H. Kress  
San Francisco, California  
My dear George:

All of the evidence which we can collect from various sources indicates that, while the Health Insurance Act was passed in Australia, they have never been able to enforce the Act. If you will look at the *Medical Journal of Australia* for March 11, 1939, you will find a letter from a physician in which he says, "Happily, it appears that national insurance is done."

The battle for and against health insurance in Australia well-nigh disrupted the profession, and it is likely that there will be changes in their constitution in relationship to the handling of such matters.

In the meantime, we have plenty of evidence that everything that our correspondent has written on this subject is a fact. It is quite possible that the simple statement that Australia has abandoned its health insurance plan is misleading unless there is also a full explanation, but the fact remains that that statement is, nevertheless, true. It is also quite possible that some time in the future attempts will be made to make the law effective, and it is possible also that someone may in the future attempt to pass another law. It is still the truth that in Australia for the present health insurance is finished.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed): MORRIS FISHBEIN.

(COPY)

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Chicago, September 5, 1939.

Dr. George H. Kress  
Secretary, California Medical Association  
San Francisco, California

Dear Doctor Kress:

I have before me a memorandum prepared by one of the associate editors of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. The following paragraph is taken from that memorandum:

"In regard to the correspondence from Doctor Kress of California: The general tone of the letters of the Australian correspondent has indicated a stubborn and persistent opposition to health insurance in that country. This opposition to health insurance has come, the correspondent says, not only from the medical profession, but also from a strong federal labor opposition; from some employers who are apprehensive about the extra cost they will have to carry as contributors to the scheme on behalf of their employees; from a body of rural opinion expressing the grievances of small farmers who will have to pay contributions for persons they employ but who themselves will not be eligible to become insured, and finally, from the existing friendly societies. This is indicated in his letter in *The Journal* for January 14, 1939, page 164."

535 North Dearborn Street.

Very sincerely yours,  
OLIN WEST.

#### Subject: Nursing Practice Act of California (1939).\*

On September 19, 1939, the Bureau of Registration of Nurses, which has been under the supervision of the Department of Public Health of the State of California, was transferred to the California Department of Professional and Vocational Standards. The following letter should be of interest:

(COPY)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Sacramento, August 31, 1939.

#### NOTICE OF NURSING PRACTICE ACT OF CALIFORNIA

A copy of the Nursing Practice Act of California, which was signed by the Governor on July 17 and becomes effective on September 19, is herewith enclosed.

The personnel of the Bureau of Registration of Nurses is being transferred to the Department of Professional and Vocational Standards. The titles of all positions will remain the same except that of Chief of the Bureau of Registration of Nurses, which will become Executive Secretary of the Board of Examiners.

The three offices will be maintained. Their addresses will be:

Board of Nurse Examiners, Department of Professional and Vocational Standards—  
Sacramento (main office).  
515 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco.  
906 State Building, Los Angeles.

BUREAU OF REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

#### Subject: Broken intra-uterine ring—Autopsy.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

September 13, 1939.

To the Editor:—Last week I performed an autopsy on a woman, thirty-three years old, who died from an acute

\* For copy of the law, write to California State Printing Office, George H. Moore, State Printer, Sacramento.  
The "Trained Attendant Act" (enacted May 5, 1919; Statutes of 1919, page 242) providing for schools for "trained attendants," remains under the jurisdiction of the California State Board of Public Health. For copy of the Act, address California State Board of Public Health, State Building, San Francisco.